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WHAT ONE LEARNS IN THE WORLD.

THERE is a good deal of spurious knowledge of the world. A crafty, manœuvring kind of personage may frequently be met with, whose half-closed eyes twinkle with astuteness and suspicion. He will sometimes, in a confidential mood, take you by the button-hole, and assert, with a mysterious modulation of his voice, that he knows the world. The probability is, that he imparts this interesting fact in consequence of your having dropped some remark in which you gave some one credit for common honesty and uprightness of intention, or advocated a fair, straightforward line of conduct. If you should unfortunately have business relations with a 'party' of this stamp—I fancy the word 'party' was first used in this odious sense by some Mr Worldly Wiseman—he will be found a sharp practitioner in matters of traffic, barter, and exchange. In case you wish to make a purchase, he will perhaps exhibit a coarse sort of skill in tickling your vanity and self-esteem. The little foibles of your character will be tenderly propitiated. If you are fond of outspeaking candour, the cunning bargainer will play the 'downright' inimitably. If your nature contains an element of Indian gravity, and you like a palaver, he will be loquacious on things in general with a particular view to commercial morality, and deliver a succession of texts for as many homilies. When the preliminary negotiations have been duly completed, your sympathising friend will wind up by asking fifty per cent. more than the price he would be willing to take, and will thus place you in the disadvantageous position of a beater-down—a haggler. Worn and disgusted, you are glad to terminate the transaction by splitting the difference. The vender gets 25 per cent. more than a fair price, and goes away pleasantly smirking; and you, the vendee, think yourself fortunate in getting a reduction on the upset price, and a lesson in knowledge of the world—*caecus emptor*.

But I beg the reader's pardon for supposing, even momentarily, that he can believe this sort of low cunning to be genuine knowledge of the world. It is the knowledge of an unluckily large class in the world, and, such as it is, is easily picked up, and scarcely worth acquiring.

If knowledge of the world makes men perfidious,
May Juba ever live in ignorance!

Nevertheless, there is a worldly wisdom which is extremely valuable, and must be learned by every prudent man, regardless of any cost but degradation. Persons whose manner of life is secluded and contem-

plative, are apt to form ideals, making a very pretty show in reverie, but as totally unfit for practical use and guidance as the paper constitutions of Abbé Sièyes. Social life, like the glorious British constitution, is a system of balancings, compensations, and patchwork. If the greatest intellects, from Plato downwards, have failed to contrive a perfect commonwealth, how can we expect to imagine, much less to realise, perfect social relations between man and man? It is our wisest plan to make the best of society as it is, and reform it as we can. To this end it is necessary to win knowledge of the world, and take care how we use it, bearing in mind that there is another knowledge, spiritual and divine, with which we must also take counsel, and the veto of which we must respect.

Now, let us think of one or two things which the freshman will learn in the school of experience.

It is a good old custom in some Elizabethan foundations, to bump new-comers. The unwary youth entering the playground, and contemplating his future school-mates with mingled feelings of awe, interest, and curiosity, is suddenly seized by some half-dozen all at once. Two lusty lads are told off to his head and shoulders, two to each leg, and he is hurried off to a venerable tree-stump, smooth and polished by the frequent ceremony, and there he is bumped—not faintly, in make-believe fashion, but soundly bumped. Now, a school is a microcosm, and I believe we may anticipate a great deal of what we have to endure in the world by inference from school-experience. I apprehend the ceremony above mentioned has two principal aims—namely, the measurement and gauging of pluck and spirit, and the reduction of self-importance. In like manner, on entering the world—that is, on passing from the partial and indulgent little home-circle to the mart, the pulpit, or the forum—a youth generally finds that certain initiatory ordeals must be submitted to. He will learn amongst his first scraps of knowledge of the world, that he must endure considerable curtailment of his self-conceit. Political theorists lay down that each citizen must yield up a portion of his liberty, for the more secure enjoyment of the remainder. In like manner, a man must give up in private life a part of his self-conceit, or else it will all be knocked out of him rather roughly. One of the advantages—among many disadvantages—of public schools I take to be, that a very good elementary lesson on this point is derivable from companionship. Boys, like men, find their level, and learn to know their position, rights, and duties, by being thrown into a multitude, and left to fight it out. An old essayist has with partial truth remarked that the shyness and reserve so noticeable

in those of a studious and meditative turn, is as often the result of self-conceit as of humility. Generally, both causes operate. Commerce with the world will remove or modify at once the causes and effect. Humility before God in the presence of eternal truth and the contemplation of spiritual holiness, is one of the best virtues of the human heart. Humility before man is but a species of abjectness, not always quite contemptible, but still a lamentable blemish. Possibly the world is but giving a beneficial lesson when it ruthlessly over-rides the prostrate soul. If experience of life teaches anything, it teaches self-reliance, and self-reliance implies self-respect. Newton compared himself to a child picking up on the ocean-shore of truth a few prettier pebbles than the rest. That was humility of the right sort. The great philosopher did not compare himself to a child amongst men, for he knew his gifts. Nothing can be more incorrect than to suppose that because a man of ability is conscious of his power, he is necessarily self-conceited. One who underrates his mental or physical endowments, is but unthankfully humble. Nor does the world exact this, but only that he recollect he is a member of a community of individuals possessing rights and feelings similar to his own, and demean himself accordingly. Let him respect his fellows, and they will respect him. He must not attempt to raise himself by depressing others, denying their merits, humbling their little pomposities, rudely exposing their harmless foibles, and concealing or justifying his own. If he is exalted by such means, the world will be against him. I think that men of letters of former days had themselves to blame in great measure for their somewhat ungenial reception by the public. They were too fond of contemning the ordinary pursuits and ambitions of mankind, and seemed to imagine that all wisdom could be put up in type, wherein they were mightily mistaken.

By the time Dame Experience has taught our novice to know his place, it is likely that a great many angularities of his character will be worn down. During the process of abrasure, he will have experienced some inconvenience and annoyance; but it will not be the worse for him in the end. The curry-comb may be a little unpleasant to Bucephalus, a steed of mettle, but his coat will be all the more sleek and shining for its use. It is not necessary or proper to yield up all individuality of character. Mankind are not intended to be rubbed together till their characters are rounded and uniform, like a box of shot, as some one says.

So far our friend will have been principally engaged in learning his relation to society. Another department of knowledge of the world which he must learn is the relation of others to him, and to one another. He will read a variety of characters, and see the working of complex passions, instincts, and aspirations; he will grow expert in interpreting motives by actions, and guiding his own conduct accordingly. Unless he is placed in peculiar circumstances, it will be forcibly impressed upon him that, what are called the institutions, customs, and etiquette of society, are not to be lightly set at naught. I daresay he will set out with an intense hatred and contempt of shams; probably he will begin by indiscriminate denunciation and persistent avoidance of everything which seems otherwise than it is. But in time it will be found expedient to divide shams into two classes—the excusable, and the inexcusable—the latter, all noble instincts will combine to condemn; the former, it will be best, morally and socially, to yield to. We must not always proclaim the whole truth within us on the house-tops, albeit our soul disdains a lie; it will not do always to let a person know our estimate of him: one has to be polite to fools and knaves.

There is a net-work of social formalism curiously

contrived, and in which a social being feels himself uncomfortably entangled. He exclaims with the laureate:

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest nature's rule!

But let him take care to conform. I think, on reflection, a certain philosophical reasonableness may be discerned in some of them. It is very well to attempt to reform social institutions, to soften down 'social tyrannies,' but the advantage of refusing allegiance to them point-blank, is greatly outbalanced by the disadvantage. In all probability, for one kindred spirit that hails the brave innovator, a dozen seasonable and pleasant friends will be lost to him. Society has with one accord pronounced that, on some occasions, it is befitting to seem pleased when one is not pleased; to keep down at the bottom of the heart personal misery, and wear a cheerful mask; to withhold your real sentiments, and substitute evasive commonplaces. One can easily, of course, admit that in extreme circumstances, or when a selfish motive prevails, this sort of behaviour is little less than hypocrisy; yet all these things must be done on some occasions; and where to draw the line, must be left to individual discretion. 'But it is not sufficient,' says that acute and rigid moralist Pascal, 'that we state only what is the truth; we are bound also not, at all times, to say all that is true; because we ought only to give publicity to things that may serve a useful purpose, and not to such as may cause pain to individuals without conducing to general utility.' This, of course, applies to the conduct of life, as well as of an argument. You meet, we will say, an acquaintance, whose conversation is the reverse of acceptable—in short, he is a bore—nevertheless, the world enjoins you to receive him pleasantly, and get rid of him with gentleness. You are thrown, suppose, into a cheerful society engaged in 'pleasance,' as the old writers have it; a great grief is gnawing at your heart; nevertheless, you gulp down your sighs, and do as little as may be to remind your companions that man is born to trouble. A friend introduces you to a stranger; you find him, on acquaintance, coarse, vain, and frivolous—briefly, a Goth. Some time after, your friend casually, and rather imprudently, asks you what you think of your new acquaintance; are you at once to proclaim that you consider him a Goth? It may happen that a friend of your family feels it a duty to take notice of you, and invites you to a Sunday dinner; you hate Sunday dinners, except at home, and don't much relish being taken notice of patronisingly; nevertheless, you cannot well say so, and therefore you go, and force yourself to be entertaining.

These crampings of the soul are no doubt unpleasant, yet I think I see in them something which gives them a kind of dignity. By men in business especially, a due regard to the exigencies of conventionalism must be paid. In the private circle, a man's character becomes well known, and allowance is often made for idiosyncrasies; but in business, the intercourse with his fellows is so limited, that no interest arises sufficient to counterbalance *prima facie* disagreeableness. Men in professions and trade therefore find it necessary to court the good-will of others by strict attention to their feelings, carefully avoiding sore places, and keeping their esoteric opinions to themselves. There are a class of persons, however, who make a point of speaking their minds, as they term it. Generally, these individuals lash the vices of the age and the crotchets of their neighbours with such a gusto, that one cannot help believing the genius of ill-feeling, and not enlightened satire, prompts their diatribes. They imagine themselves to be bravely independent, when they are only *brusque*. Of course, it must be admitted that many conventionalisms are

nuisances, but not all. We are a little too apt to rebel against harmless, nay, beneficial formalism. What do we observe in descending the scale of society? Do we not find that feelings are ruffled by frequent and gross personalities? Wit, humour, moral counsel, and intellectual discussion—all become personal. You find practical jokers in abundance, open mockery of personal defects, merriment at personal annoyances. Impudence is the only safeguard. Men vex one another with a relish. Friendship loses its delicate flavour, and even virtuous love is deprived of much of its refinement. For my part, I esteem social tyrannies better than social anarchy. Let us be patient. If need be, agitate constitutionally in the social parliament, and bring in a social reform bill; but in the meantime we must respect, so far as conscience will permit, the powers that be—pay morning calls, talk tittle-tattle at tea-tables, discourse vigorously on things indifferent, smile when we are enquired, and be thankful to the man who introduced the weather as neutral ground of converse. In short, we must indulge in a little innocent conformity, until we can emigrate to arcadian groves and utopian cities, or dwell in them at home, or cease to be gregarious. I have said that there seems to be a certain reasonableness in social forms; they may be regarded as so many fences artificially raised to protect us from rude collision with the prejudices and self-esteem of others. Many, no doubt, have almost survived their usefulness, or at least have become so stiff and antiquated as to excite ridicule and occasion annoyance; but in default of a revised code, they can hardly be dispensed with. If all men were equally refined and considerate, the proprieties of life would suggest themselves spontaneously. There is always a class of people, however, who are guided more correctly by external regulations than by innate sensibilities; and there is always another class ready to attach too much importance to rigid etiquette, and live according to the letter rather than the spirit of the law. These are the people who convert wholesome rules into tyrannical restraints, and hinder social pleasures by the very means intended to enhance them.

Although it is perhaps expedient to fall in with the manners and customs we find existing around us, we must not infer that it is inexpedient to enter a protest now and then against any portion of the shoe that pinches unduly. It is a Briton's privilege to grumble. After all, how have we gained our political liberties but by grumbling; and it may be that our social liberties shall be gained and protected by a similar process. Her Majesty's Opposition is an embodied grumble. By all means, let the principle be extended to the realm of social conventionalism.

'THE FIELD' OF YORE.

THE days of chivalry are gone—in *re venaticæ*, as well as in *re militari*. We do not carry things on with the heartiness of our fathers. With the war-part of the question this reminiscence has little to do, though it sends me back to the time when the old Post-office yard in College Green rang with the exultant cries of news-boys, announcing the escape of Napoleon Bonaparte from Elba in a third edition of the *Correspondent Post*. I can still see with my mind's eye young Mansfield, the son of an English judge, in his gay hussar uniform, gazing with pleased astonishment at the great fact, on the placard over against King William; while an apple-woman clapped him on the shoulder, and looking up into his handsome face exclaimed: 'There, yer sowle! your thrade's alive yet.' That was more than he was himself in three months after.

I can still recall the venerable head and dark sparkling eyes of old Dana, colonel of the Highland Watch,

as he related how, in the same moment, his two palms had been perforated in one of the peninsular fights; but whether by one and the same bullet, or by two, he never could tell. All he could vouch for was, that if his hands did happen to be clasped together at the time, he 'was na prayin'.' Let us hope that he could not have said the same thing on the 18th of June following, when he fell at the head of his gallant corps, and his white hairs swept the dust. Such things seem to belong to yesterday, so much fresher are they in the memory, which was then young, than any modern instance.

But our affair, good reader, is with the departed glories of the chase. We mourn the palmy state of the *Northern Rangers*, with that fine old sportsman, Lord Roden, crossing the country from Slieve Donard to the Fews without a check. No sneaking, bellowing, broken-winded hack of an agitator had a chance of coming within a view hollow of him. The present earl—alas, *quantum mutatus ab illo!*—could not have led the field after the manner of his sire, if he had ever so great a mind, for he must have always ridden fourteen stone. But, at all events, their tastes lay in an opposite direction.

Yet we must not disparage the heavy weights, remembering how many of the most eminent fox-hunters of the age could have made an archbishop kick the beam. Who, having seen, can ever forget Sir Henry Parnell, tall, portly, and stout as a quartermaster of the Life Guards? King George had not a handsomer or a better-fed member of parliament in his majesty's Opposition, or one who could ride to hounds with more thorough judgment; the right man in the right place always. I speak of those years in which the Kildare Club and the Queen's County Club were wont to rendezvous for a fortnight together, after Christmas, in some border town; and every day (Sundays excepted), one or other of their packs broke cover in the neighbourhood.

'Them was the times!' as poor old Harry Lewis used to say, when every stable and shed for miles around was in requisition; for the modern economical system of equipping a fox-hunter out of a tailor's shop was as yet unknown. Nobody had then heard of one horse and two red coats for an outfit.

Every sportsman who pretended to do the thing in fast style kept a stud. Conolly of the Black Pits—I believe his father saved bacon—had four hunters, besides hacks, always at hand. Farrell, another man of business, had half a dozen. The country gentlemen went about it with less pretension; but they were all unexceptionably mounted, and in sufficient force to be able to take their own place and keep it without distressing their cattle.

Sir Henry Parnell, however, was seldom seen among them apart from his gray steed. Of course, he did not go out every day; but thrice a week we never 'missed him from the 'customed brake.' When the chase began, he fell into his place without effort or display, went quietly along, taking no heed of those who dashed by him in their new ardour; and though he seemed, like Miss Edgeworth's racer, 'Little Botherem,' to be 'driving all before him,' instead of shewing them the way, he still kept his game in view. In the longest run, whoever could catch a sight of the dogs, was sure to descry the gallant gray and his portly rider in the same *coup d'œil*. If Conolly, or any other of the fast uns, descended from his breathless steed to vault into a cool saddle, Sir Henry generally trotted past with an observation on the appearance of the green wheat, or the state of the fences, to which the other could only gasp a reply; and when the fox was killed or run aground, the honourable member for Queen's County was seen to ride away out of the field with his placid smile, leaving younger and more impulsive sportsmen to discuss the incidents and

fluctuations of the pursuit. He was the most remarkable living example in those days of the value of the maxim, *festina lente*, for he literally seemed to 'walk into' the flying foe, whilst others were breaking their necks and foundering their horses to overtake him.

An element in those reunions, which it might be improper to say we now desiderate, though certainly we have it not, was the clerical fox-hunter. It is the pleasure of modern reformers, both political and religious, to lay all the vices and deficiencies of the Protestant Church establishment in Ireland at the door of those of its clergy who in days past amused themselves with field-sports. It is no personal concern of mine to defend them. I never jumped a potato-trench in my life. Any man might easily be better employed; *à fortiori*, any clergyman. But there is too great a disposition to make a scapegoat of the sporting parson, to the plenary abolution of every other ordained offender. The great aversion and dislike with which the Church establishment has long been regarded by our Roman Catholic population, can be traced but in a very small degree to the amusements of its clergy. We should seek the cause rather, as far as personal influences have had any effect in producing it, in the tithe-system, now happily extinct, and in the pertinacity and rigour with which, in bygone times, many individuals of the order asserted what they considered their rights. The law of tithes, in all cases, imposed an odious necessity, which in many was rendered more odious by the extreme severity of its enforcement. That cause repelled thousands from the church door, who would not have turned away from the frank and cordial, though perhaps too worldly, urbanity of the clerical sportsman.

Nor would it be correct to say that clergymen of that class were, in the times we speak of, necessarily careless in their office, or indifferent as to the performance of its duties. Allowance must be made for the varying habits and customs of society. The world has become more staid and orderly, in outward deportment, since the Georgian era; and according to the sacred maxim, 'Like people like priest,' the manners of the clergy are no longer as unreserved as they were. There are men still living, and not much beyond the prime of life, who are an honour to the clerical profession, and whom I have known to partake heartily in the pleasures of the chase. Yet should you ask, Are they not now better and more effective ministers of the Gospel than they were then? I should hesitate before I replied to that question. Of course, they have done right to give up the favourite relaxation of their younger days. If they had clung to it in defiance of the altered feelings and opinions of society, they could hardly be deemed either wise or earnest members of their calling.

Yet the individuals to whom I allude were always much and deservedly esteemed in the Church; and their teaching was not considered at variance with their practice, because, in the intervals of parochial duty, they rode occasionally after the hounds. Sure I am that the other frequenters of the field were no worse for that association. Still less reason is there to suppose that they are better for its discontinuance. Young gentlemen, the sons of our gentry, did not then take the field with black pipes in their mouths and whisky-flasks in their coat-pockets; but they rode to the cover like gentlemen, and they returned after the day's sport in a proper moral condition to present themselves to the female members of the family, or occupy the hours which remained of the day in reading or business.

Honest Nat Smith—peace to the memory of a man of worth!—was a fox-hunting parson; that is to say, he rode his one horse occasionally after the Emo Pack, and enjoyed the amusement while it lasted. But he was an earnest and diligent pastor, who neglected no duty

in order to follow this pastime. On the contrary, the fine health and animal spirits to which it conducted, seemed only to render him more energetic and active in the performance of all his clerical functions. His bishop, a first-rate equestrian himself, though I cannot say that he ever sported the shovel-hat across the country, was out on a tour of inspection through the diocese, and had sent orders to Nat to attend upon him at his church. But the curate thought himself bound to do the full honours of the parish to his commanding officer. Instead, therefore, of waiting in band and surplice, to receive him at the gate, he mounted the old bay, and met his lordship, as a high-sheriff meets a judge, at the bounds of his jurisdiction.

The bishop came cantering on a noble iron-gray, of which kind he always kept the most perfect stud in the church, and haughtily waving his hand to the curate's humble salutation, rather accelerated than checked his speed, as he passed on. But Nat was not to be thrown out in such a race. He knew his distance well enough, and therefore did not venture to make it a neck-and-neck affair. Still, withal, he would not be left to ride along with the groom, but kept the bay well in hand, close upon his lordship's crupper, yet a little at one side. After a rasping gallop over two or three breathing hills, the bishop saw that the thing was not to be done—for he had evidently purposed to get to the church before the parson could be there to receive him—and so he condescended to pull up and enter into a colloquy over his left shoulder.

'I suppose, sir,' his lordship observed interrogatively, 'you hunt all the week, and ride a steeple-chase on Sundays?'

'I seldom go beyond the pace we have been keeping just now, my lord,' replied Nat; 'for, indeed, no one nag could stand it.'

This was enough for the dignitary; and as such men, when they have any spark of manly generosity in their character, always admire the independence which temperately asserts itself, he ever afterwards accented Nat with unusual courtesy. But he gave him nothing. My poor friend lived and died a curate; that, however, seemed to give him little concern, for he had means sufficient to supply his simple wants, and a surplus besides, for the indulgence of a benevolent and hospitable nature. 'What more need I wish for?' he would say, 'without chick or child; unless, indeed, it were the position which even a nominal preferment would give me in the eyes of others; and that, I own, would gratify me in my old days. But it cannot be helped; and while they, who know me best, think well of me, it can be easily endured.'

'But, Nat, my friend,' I asked, 'how comes it that you are arrived at this time of life without a family around you? you who are endowed with so many social and domestic virtues, and would have so enlivened the hearth by your pleasant temper and good spirits; why did you never marry?'

'Ah, don't ask me that,' he answered with a droll gravity. 'The question reminds me of a great fright and a great escape. You know what an easy-tempered fellow I am; a butt for every one, in fact, like Falstaff; and how even now, with the snows of sixty above my brows, men of all sorts, and women too, "take a pride to gird at me." Striplings of twenty address me by my Christian name; and that, indeed, not in its entirety—as your modern revivers of old barbarisms say—but in its undignified monosyllabic abbreviation. It was the same thing always, and I should be an ungrateful wretch to complain of it; since it is to a sort of equivocal connected therewith, I feel now indebted for my free condition. I did once put the momentous question in a fit of heedless desperation at a slight, fancied or imaginary, from one to whom the poor heart would fain have proposed it, but dared not. In the moment of rankling disappointment, a young

one crossed my path, of whom I wish now to say nothing worse than that she would not have suited me at all for a wife: but in my vexation of spirit at the time, I thought she would just do; and so I put the question to her, plain and short: "Miss, will you marry me?"

'That was courageous!'

'Courageous, sir? It was rash; it was desperate! The words had scarcely passed the fence of my teeth, when I was seized with a tremor, and would have given my best horse—for at that time I had two, a Sunday hack, and one for work, you know—to recall them.'

'But her answer, Nat—her answer?'

'Oh, that was short, sharp, and decisive. She could not speak at first for laughing; for she was a giggling thing, and—if you will pardon my vanity—I think the joy and surprise set her off on this occasion more than usual. But the answer was not long a-coming.'

'And what was it?'

'I will, Nat!'

'Why, man, that was an acceptance.'

'So you may think, sir; but I received it in another sense; for, Heaven bless her, she was a Dublin girl, and gave out her syllables with the peculiar tone and twang of that sweet city, where they call Tom, Tam; and George, Jarge.'

'And I suppose you will say not—nat.'

'Of course: and so did I construe it.'

'O recreant knight,

Have you not heard it said full oft,

A woman's nay doth stand for naught?'

'Yes; so I have been told, and I partly believe it; but in my bachelor's vocabulary, a woman's nat doth stand for nay, and to that reading I nailed her.'

'And how did you convey your interpretation?'

'Simply by looking very disappointed; asking pardon for my presumption, and saying: "Since you will not—you may be sure I emphasised the o—there is no more to be said."'

'Cruel Nat! Pray, how did she take that sting?'

'Why, she laughed again, but not quite so boisterously as before; and ever after she called me Mr Smith when she spoke to me; leaving no room, had I repeated the question, for mistaking her meaning. I must add,' he concluded with a chuckle, 'and let it be a lesson to you, my young friend, how you put questions—that lady is still alive, and the mother of twelve children!'

Our theological chapter would be imperfect without the priest. Few complete 'meets' wanted that feature; and a fine broad one it was, unlike the whey-faced species which ultramontane asceticism is introducing apace into our rural economy, contrary to good-fellowship of every kind, and very much against the peace of our sovereign lady the Queen. If the fox-hunting parson was commonly a *fourteen-stunner*, the fox-hunting priest was equal to that at least. He was to be distinguished by his rotundity of jowl—so large, as to justify the wit of the Maynooth barber, who proposed to take a contract for shaving the whole college by the acre—and so hard and red, that nothing, in these degenerate days, can be its parallel, if it be not one of Mrs Fleming's 'cherry-coloured hams.' By that and the tan boot-tops, surmounted not unfrequently by drab unmentionables, P. P. might be picked out of ten thousand.

Dr Doyle (J. K. L.) had not yet put his interdict upon the chase, nor, with terrible hospitality, sweated down the big proportions of his clergy by the periodical festivities of a *Retreat*; but he had begun to look askance at their uncircumscribed dimensions, and hinted a desire to be surrounded by boon-companions the very opposite to the taste of Julius Caesar; for whereas that old Roman wished to 'have men about him who

were fat,' Cassius himself could not be too lean for the lenient convivialities of Braganza Hall.*

It is considered orthodox when an agreeable bishop meets his clergy in conference or at a visitation, that he should provide a repast for them, and in every way manifest a lively interest in their good case. I have known an archdeacon at the primate's dinner in Drogheda, acting, of course by authority, to rate the neglect of the caterer, who had failed to provide a salmon, with as much severity as if he had committed a breach of the Thirty-nine Articles. 'Sir,' he said, 'you might as well leave out the Athanasian Creed on Easter Sunday, as omit a *Boyne salmon* from the visitation-dinner of this loyal diocese.'

But our starch prelate of Salamanca, far from caring for the good cheer of his priests, or betraying the least satisfaction at their jolly condition, sometimes began his allocution with some such phrase as—'My reverend brethren, I am grieved and scandalised to see you grown so fat. Father Martin, that ruddy complexion ill becomes you. Mr Keogh, you must endeavour to grow less muscular, or you will never rise in the Church.'

One of the divines so reproved was a sporting curate, who, long after a positive prohibition against the chase was issued, found a way to follow his favourite amusement, whilst his obedience to his spiritual master moulted no feather. This was managed with nice address. He usually had two or three parochial calls of no pressing urgency, on a hunting morning; and they were arranged with such geographical tact, that whatever direction the game might take, there lay the path of his reverence's duty. 'If he be a sporting fox,' he would say, 'he will make for Ballinakill; and it so happens, more by chance than good-luck, that a very old woman has sent me a message by her grandchild that she would be glad to see me some fine morning. She lives close by the wood there; and a finer morning surely for going to see the poor old lady than a southerly wind and a cloudy sky give earnest of, neither she nor I need expect at the season of the year. Well, then, the shortest way, next to that which the bird flies, is the way a dog-fox, when in good wind, takes towards the place he desires to reach without the least possible delay. Away I go then, the shortest road, over field and fallow, hedge and ditch, for Ballinakill; but if at the same time a pack of dogs happen to be running after a wild baste in the very same direction, how can I help that? *Nihil occurrit ecclesie*. No hindrance or obstruction is to retard the march of the church. The bishop himself, no, nor the pope, would not have me go round.'

Thus, in whatever point of the compass the scent lay and the game broke away, in that line of duty Father Festus had a call, and he never neglected it as long as he had a horse to carry him. Peace be with his ashes; he was a hearty, kind, and worthy man. I wish his mother, the Church of Rome, had in this land a thousand anointed sons of the same tastes and the same temper. Her present progeny, what are they like—prowling about everywhere with their eyes looking in all directions except in the faces of honest men—but a pack of poachers?

If the fox is now doomed to die without benefit of clergy, it may be some compensation that his last run is seldom uncheered by the presence of the softer sex. The meet, if not the finish, is beautified by an imposing concourse, or, as Bob Blake happily malaprops it, an imposing conquest of spinsters and their mammas, such as our ancestors never were wont to behold in that situation. The full, practical extent

* Braganza House, built in the neighbourhood of Carlow by the late General Sir Dudley Hill, and purchased from him as a residence for the Roman Catholic bishops of Kildare and Leighlin.

of feminine sympathy in the chase was expressed, fifty years since, in the song—

The dogs began to bark,
And I went out for to see;
A prattie young man came a-hunting,
But he was na hunting for me.
Oh, what 'll become of me?
Oh, what shall I do?
There's na body comin' to marry me;
Na body comin' to woo!

But this won't do any longer. The prattie young maidens go a-hunting now-a-days on their own hook. Equipages are congregated at the wood-side, and when the dogs throw off, and some old sportsman would fain lose no time in getting upon their track, too often Mrs Quigly's jaunting-car stops the gap, or the four Miss Kildarbies, in their one-horse fly, trot across his path, mocking the air with colours idly spread. On such occasions, Irish politeness is put to the very pin of its collar to acknowledge that the right women are always in the right place.

Yet there is something extremely diverting in the ardour with which the fair ones follow the game, especially those matrons who have olive plants to dispose of. How they do whip over highways and byways, in the hope of falling in with the red-coats again; and how skilfully they make their casts towards the most likely places for such chance rencontres!

The Donnybrook road on the 'walking Sunday' was the sight of all sights, with its triple row of cars laden with beauty in its flashiest attire; but it may be questioned if the pace of that renowned celebration could at all compare with the speed of barouches, phaetons, and jarcies, which transfer their delicate freights, on any hunting morning, from one cover towards another, in the hope of crossing upon the fox's path in his flight.

It is strange that fair young creatures should take such an interest in that amusement; and stranger still, how the *materfamilias*, whose bones one might almost hear rattling in the rugged transit, affects a super-womanly delight in it. With her, such a forenoon's avocation is surely the pursuit of sons-in-law under difficulties.

MODERN LEPROSY.

Two great diseases of the middle ages, such as the sweating sickness, the various forms of plague, the dancing mania, and other epidemics, have had this much in common, that, although they exhibited for a long period a disposition to break out afresh under favourable circumstances, they at length so completely disappeared, that mankind have come to regard them more in the light of medical curiosities than as great afflictions which devastated the most fertile and populous regions of the earth. There was, however, a malady—endemic all over Europe from the tenth to the sixteenth century, not characterised, like epidemics, by rapidity of attack or excessive mortality, yet regarded, if possible, with still greater alarm. This disease, the leprosy, long supposed to have become extinct, has suddenly of late years assumed a fresh activity; and as many distinguished physicians maintain that a general outbreak is now imminent, some account of its nature, mode of development, and results, may not be uninteresting.

The old leprosy, made familiar to us from the important position it occupies in the hygienic code of the Jews, prevailed for more than 500 years on the continent of Europe, in Great Britain, and in Ireland. Its treatment forms rather an interesting chapter in the history of civilisation. In many countries, the unhappy subjects of the disease were looked upon with extreme aversion. Their affliction was considered the effect of an especial vengeance of God, for grievous

sins committed by themselves or their forefathers; and oftener than once, during the existence of a panic, attendant upon a violent epidemic, large numbers of helpless lepers, on a charge of having poisoned the wells, were barbarously put to death. In other countries, again, a treatment the very opposite was pursued. Kings thought it a privilege to wash their sores, and no gift was considered more expiatory of sin before Heaven, than bequeathing a munificent gift to a leper-hospital.

The condition of the leper, even in the most civilised countries, was extremely sad. In addition to the inconvenience of his loathsome and incurable malady, he was prevented using any means for his own support: such property as he might have owned was taken from him; the law classed him with idiots and lunatics; and a belief in the contagious nature of his malady, led to his perpetual seclusion. The hospitals or leper-houses provided for their retreat were very numerous; there was scarcely a town of any size without an establishment of this sort. Some, richly endowed, were exclusively devoted to the leprosy, and placed under the jurisdiction of special officers; others, again, were attached to monasteries, and subject to ecclesiastical supervision. Lazar-houses of both kinds abounded in Scotland: there was one at Aldeneston, in Lauderdale, superintended by the monks of Melrose; there were similar institutions at Elgin, Ayr, and Aberdeen; a leper-hospital was raised at Glasgow in the reign of King David II.; while one was erected at Greenside, so late as 1589, for the benefit of the inhabitants of Edinburgh. These, as well as the large establishments in England and on the continent, fell gradually into disuse, and their revenues were appropriated to other charitable purposes, or not unfrequently seized upon by a rapacious court favourite.

Leprosy, however, as we have said, has begun to develop itself anew. It exists at this moment in different parts of the world, but is especially prevalent in the West Indies and in Norway. Out of the comparatively small population of Norway, there are upwards of 2000 lepers. Occasional cases make their appearance nearer home.

There are two varieties of the modern or existing disease—the tubercular, and the anæsthetic or joint form. The former is much more common, and unfortunately almost hopelessly incurable. It presents the most characteristic type of the disease, giving that painful appearance to the countenance which has in all ages made 'the hoar leprosy' so repulsive. The spots generally shew themselves first on the face, but by no means uniformly there. Their colour varies from a glistening white to a dark blue. As the disease advances, and the peculiar morbid deposit enters more extensively into the system, the beard, eyebrows, and eyelids fall out, the voice grows affected, and the sight becomes seriously impaired. These symptoms are constantly aggravated by depression of spirits, until at length, after the invasion of different important internal organs, death releases the sufferer. The average duration of this form of leprosy is about ten years—a prolongation of life we may probably ascribe to the immunity of the bones from the disease, an immunity that among other advantages permits mastication, and in consequence, so far leaves the function of digestion unimpaired.

The other, or anæsthetic variety, affects the joints of the hands and feet, and is characterised by a numbness of those parts. Not unfrequently, if the disease be about to develop itself in the upper extremity, the patient complains of a cold feeling, extending from the elbow downwards. Wasting of the affected muscles ensues, and the patient becomes unable to put on a glove or to use a needle. The disease speedily attacks the osseous texture below, and a joint is often removed

with the neatness of a surgical operation. Very frequently this form of leprosy is arrested in its progress, and the patient recovers with a maimed foot or hand. In other cases, again, the disease goes on to develop itself in more vital parts.

There is no especial age at which either variety shows a tendency to appear. The disease has been noticed alike in childhood and at advanced age. In the West Indies, the white population is much less liable to it than the natives or the Jews. Women also seem to possess a greater immunity than men.

Leprosy is a disease essentially dependent upon a blood-poison, belonging to the large class of which scrofula, cancer, and rheumatism are representatives. It unfortunately further resembles these in the difficulty of its cure. Almost every article of the pharmacopoeia has been employed for this purpose, yet a specific remains to be discovered. But although incurable, it is satisfactory to be assured that the great source of terror in earlier ages—namely, dread of its communication by contagion—is completely groundless. Repeated observations have established this important fact. At the same time, the hereditary character, or as medical men say, the hereditary tendency to the disease is not denied. It is not unfrequently seen to pass over one generation, reappearing with fresh vigour in the next.

We are quite as ignorant of the causes of leprosy as of its treatment. With respect to other diseases, whose cure frequently baffles medical science, we have almost invariably some acquaintance with their predisposing causes. We know that exposure to infection, deficiency of certain articles of food, breathing a polluted atmosphere, predispose respectively to typhus fever, scurvy, and cholera. But no peculiarity of climate, atmosphere, or diet satisfactorily accounts for the decay in one age or the development in another of the leprosy poison.

That this disease, like all others, has its own natural laws which, though undiscovered, we cannot regard as capricious, is undoubted; and we trust that the increasing attention to it now excited among medical men and physiologists, may lead to an early discovery of them. Meanwhile, with all our uncertainty, we may confidently assert, that attention to the general principles of hygiene will be found by communities and individuals the most effectual preventives, should the apprehended outbreak of this disease unhappily occur.

KIRKE WEBBE, THE PRIVATEER CAPTAIN.

CHAPTER III.

AFTER saying 'Grace,' as described in the last chapter, Captain Webbe suggested, that as it was a tough yarn he had to spin, it might be as well to ascertain previously how my grandame was doing, and so arrange that we might be secure from interruption. I agreed, and hastened to the Crown Tavern. Mrs Linwood was, I found, considerably better, but still lamentably weak and nervous. A fly was at the door, in which, accompanied by Mr Beale and Nancy Dow, she was about to be conveyed to Oak Villa. I placed my mother's letter in her pocket, and, having seen her safely off, rejoined my new friend at the Royal Hotel.

Captain Webbe had made preparation, during my brief absence, for a cozy as well as lengthened sitting. The fire had been replenished, and heaped up on the hob; and a bundle of cigars, decanters filled with ruby and amber coloured wine—no doubt, for my especial delectation, as there was besides a plentiful

supply of brandy and hot water—had been placed upon the table.

'Take a cigar,' said Mr Kirke Webbe, 'if only to oblige me; it may prevent that quite sufficiently open countenance of yours from yawning insufferably, and, moreover, shade, in some degree, its inquisitive brightness, which might else dazzle and confuse my ideas.'

'I daresay, captain, you think that very clever—I don't. Nevertheless, I shall take a cigar—two or three, possibly, if you are especially tedious. And now, if you please, go ahead.'

'Nay, I must first go back, and a long way, too—as far back as 1792—in the autumn of which year two gentlemen and bachelors, of about the same age—twenty-five, namely—who had never met before, made each other's acquaintance whilst shooting over the Lord Petre's well-stocked covers in the vicinage of the market-town of Romford, Essex. One of those gentlemen-bachelors was William Linwood, only son and heir to Robert Linwood, hide and skin merchant—who had departed this life in Leadenhall Street, London, about three years previously—and Margaret his wife, who, since her husband's death, had withdrawn to Wales, where she found exercise for her constitutional activity in the superintendence of a large dairy-farm, the profits whereof were to aid her son in achieving the high social position to which, in her fond opinion, his personal and mental gifts so well entitled him. I speak too rapidly, perhaps?'

'Not at all. Allow me, however, to remark, that your speech would be pleasanter if it were less sardonic—jibing; but that is, I fear, a confirmed habit, and one which you take perverse pains to cultivate.'

'If that, Master Linwood, is your serious, well-considered opinion,' drawled Captain Webbe through his nose, simultaneously with the ejection in the same way of two jets of smoke from a fresh cigar, 'I must lose no time in endeavouring to mend my manners in that particular. To resume, nevertheless, a narrative to which a deeper interest attaches just now than to wisest words of babes and sucklings. The other youthful sportsman, I was going on to say, was Mr Kirke Webbe, at that time, and in a social, pecuniary sense, an indefinite gentleman, whose parents had both died during his legal infancy, and whilst he was undergoing the preliminary ordeal of midshipmanship, consisting chiefly of mast-headings, on board his majesty's ship *Gladiator*. A worthy, most worthy couple,' continued Webbe, with sudden seriousness, 'who, from prudential motives, did not marry till late in life, after a courtship of twenty years, lived in perfect harmony, and died within four days of each other, leaving to their idolised boy something over a thousand pounds, scraped together by ceaseless industry and inflexible self-denial—one life, one hope, one tomb!'

'A striking proof, Master Linwood,' resumed Webbe more briskly, after emptying his tumbler at a gulp—'a striking proof, I say, Master Linwood, that virtues, unlike certain diseases, are not always hereditary; unless, indeed, they are governed by the same law as transmitted insanity and gout, which are said to skip usually over one generation, in order to fasten more certainly on the next: according to which hypothesis, my son should be a model youth.'

'You have a son?'

'Truly, I have. Harry is a few months, I think, older than you, and about the same height and figure. But my good young friend, we are steering a very zigzag course with the story. Let us endeavour to

keep a little closer to the wind. Kirke Webbe, I was telling you, having scrambled through the preliminary six years of midshipmanship, would, there could be no doubt, have creditably passed for lieutenant—he would be a very sorry lubber that did not—when a difficulty occurred between him and Old Blueblazes, captain of the *Gladiator*—

‘Old Blueblazes!’

‘His ship sobriquet, of course, derived from the flaming hue of his proboscis. A grim old salt was he, fit for nothing upon earth but fighting and drinking, in both of which accomplishments it is but doing him justice to say he was A1. The difficulty with me fell out thus. But first please to understand, young sir,’ continued Webbe, ‘that I go over these matters with you, forasmuch that as it is certain some good-natured friend will inform you, if he has not done so already, that I was kicked out of the royal navy, it is well with reference to the copartnership we have entered into that you should be acquainted with the true version of the affair. The difficulty, I repeat, between Blueblazes and me fell out thus: the *Gladiator* lay at anchor in Plymouth Sound. The old fellow was, I supposed, in his cabin sleeping off the fumes of his after-dinner grog; the lieutenant of the watch, a moony sort of chap, was perched upon one of the guns about midships, reading a book, with his face towards the bows, when the devil, who so delights in finding work for idle boys and men, suggested to me and another promising youth to have just one quiet turn at leap-frog upon the sacred quarter-deck.’

‘A turn at leap-frog upon the quarter-deck!’

‘Just that, my ingenious young friend. I am not surprised that, landman though you are, your hair stands on end at the bare mention of such an enormity. Mine did whenever I afterwards thought of it, gradually falling off in consequence, till I was left, as you see, nearly as bald as a coot.’

‘Well, I had my leap, and was making a back for my friend, when the captain suddenly seized me by the neck, and had I not clung to him like grim death, would, I verily believe, have pitched me into Plymouth Sound. Finding, however, that if I went over the side, he must follow, he dropped me on my feet, at the same time favouring me with a couple of tremendous cuffs in the ear, that set my brains spinning like a top. But for that, I could never have had the inconceivable audacity to up fist, and deal a post-captain a blow on the chest, which knocked him clean off his pins, and laid him sprawling upon the quarter-deck.’

‘Are you serious in saying that you knocked down the captain?’

‘As sure as you sit there, I did—impossible, preternatural as it sounds. No great thing, either, to do in itself; one of the captain’s legs being crippled with the gout, and the other a wooden one.’

‘Imagine, if you can, Master Linwood, the wild consternation, the hurricane-uproar that arose as it passed through the ship that that devil’s cub, Kirke Webbe, had flogged Old Blueblazes! Officers and men seemed to think the world had come to an end; and death, or worse punishment, was unanimously awarded to the sacrilegious culprit.’

‘Blueblazes himself, who at bottom was as placable and generous as he was bibulous and brave, was the least excited and angered of them all; and, though I was no favourite of the rough old salt, it was his cockswain that, in the dead of night, released me from confinement, led me past the sentry—who had suddenly become deaf as well as blind, the cramp in my legs causing me to stumble heavily when within a yard of him—lowered me from a port-hole into a shore-punt alongside, and cast off the painter with a curse—his own, and a purse—the captain’s—containing ten guineas, which he flung after me.’

‘You now know, Mr Linwood,’ resumed Captain Webbe, after another gulp of the fiery liquid, which had no more visible effect upon him than water upon a duck’s back—‘you now know how it happened that the king’s service and I parted company. I was then close upon twenty-one years of age: the day after attaining my legal majority, I obtained possession of the before-mentioned thousand pounds odd; and the next four years were passed in acquiring a knowledge of the ways of mankind, as displayed in London; an interesting study, which the limitation, rigidly adhered to, of my expenditure to two hundred pounds a year, greatly hampered, as you may suppose.’

‘Nevertheless, I may say without vanity that I had made progress by the autumn of 1792. Moreover, my thousand pounds odd having by that time diminished to two hundred, I bethought me that it would be prudent to delay no longer an endeavour to turn that knowledge to practical account; and it was more for the sake of being able to ask myself quietly a few important questions, than any love of sport, that I accepted leave to beat up the Lord Petre’s Essex covers. There fate willed it that William Linwood and I should meet for the first time; he mutually pleased with each other, and swear eternal friendship; or rather, we should have done so, but for an untoward accident which befell us both.’

‘What accident?’

‘Falling in love with the same damsel—the young and charming Emily Waller, sole daughter and heiress presumptive of Anthony Waller, Esq., of Cavendish Square, London, and then upon a visit at Hare Park, not far out of Romford.—Touch the bell, if you please; the fire is getting low.’

‘Pray go on; you tantalise one terribly.’

‘William Linwood and I fell into bondage instantaneously; he irredeemably—whilst I was a much less willing and tractable captive. In fact, between you and me, I doubt that I was really a captive at all. My fancy or imagination was no doubt considerably dazzled by the young lady’s personal charms and graces; but much more, I am pretty confident, by the reflected lustre of her reputedly large fortune.’

‘I can easily believe that, Mr Kirke Webbe.’

‘Which shews, Mr William Linwood, junior, that you can appreciate character. Well, having then a very good opinion—which has really improved upon better acquaintance—of my worthy self, I saw no reason why I should not compete with Mr Linwood for the favour of the amiable heiress presumptive; and thus it came to pass, as before intimated, that the flame of friendship received a damper.’

‘Very absurd that, you will say,’ presently continued Captain Webbe, ‘when I inform you that the lady did not condescend to honour either of us with the slightest notice, except by carefully avoiding the paths and places we usually frequented! I, for my part, bore the pangs of despised love with a noble equanimity; but poor Linwood, having fallen into a state of semi-distractedness, finally hit upon the remarkable expedient of endeavouring to obtain access to Miss Waller’s presence, by striking up an innocent flirtation with her *demoiselle de compagnie*, Mademoiselle de Féron.’

‘Louise Féron, the Frenchwoman we saw to-day!’

‘Louise Féron, the Frenchwoman whom your grandame so viciously assaulted a few hours since; but at the time I am speaking of, a handsome young person, calling herself Mademoiselle de Féron, and pretendingly the sole remaining scion of a recently extinguished and noble French house. She had been engaged to perfect Miss Waller in the French language, and her youthful mistress was much attached to her. Let me see—where was I?’

‘Speaking of my father’s flirtation with De Féron—or Féron.’

'Right! To continue, then. How the unfortunate misapprehension on the demoiselle's part arose, I cannot say—her bad English and Linwood's worse French had no doubt much to do with it—but it is certain that she fully believed the young Englishman to be madly in love with her, and dying to make her his lawful wife.'

'Could that be her serious conviction?'

'Her serious conviction! I should think it was, indeed; and a trifle over. I had abundant proof of that. Finding I had quite recovered from love-fever—a very mild attack, as I have said—Linwood gave me a letter one fine day for Miss Waller, which I undertook to place for delivery in Mademoiselle de Féron's hands. I met that volcanic individual in Hare Park, and fulfilled my commission. Fire leaped from her dark eyes at sight of the direction in Linwood's hand, and you should have seen the rage and hate that blazed in them as, having instantly torn open the letter, she devoured its contents. That done, she tore it to shreds, flinging the same at innocent me, and accompanying that demonstration by a shower of epithets and imprecations, which was quite decisive of her birth and status in French society.'

'The next day but one, Miss Waller left Hare Park for London with her demoiselle de compagnie; and I lost sight of Mademoiselle de Féron for nearly three years, during which, Linwood, having managed to obtain a proper introduction to the family in Cavendish Square, had wooed, won, and married Emily Waller; and you, Master William, were passing with promise through the first of man's seven ages. Have you yet reached the *third*, may I ask?' added Captain Webbe with keen abruptness.

'The third! What the deuce do you mean?'

'That of the lover, to be sure—'

With a woful ballad,
Made to his mistress's eyebrow.'

'No; my time is not yet come.'

'I am rejoiced to hear that,' exclaimed Webbe; 'it almost insures the success of our bold venture.'

'The plague it does! As how, pray?'

'Anon—anon, my dear fellow. I was saying,' continued Webbe, 'that three years elapsed before I again sighted Linwood after we left Essex. The same fate that had befallen him, had overtaken me. I also was a husband and a father. Mademoiselle Féron—she had modestly dropped the '*de*'—was still languishing in single blessedness—at least she said so then, and I believe she spoke the truth—and had lately re-entered your mamma's service as nurse, or nursery-governess, to your infant highness. What her motive could be for accepting a menial situation in your father's family, puzzled me. Poverty might be one compelling motive; but I wronged her grossly if some vague but abiding purpose of working mischief to the man by whom—to the woman for whom—she had been, in her own belief, scornfully slighted and wronged—was not another and more powerful one.'

'A circumstance that occurred during my visit to South Audley Street, where your father then resided, confirmed that impression or belief; albeit it is, I admit, barely possible that I misinterpreted that incident or circumstance.'

'You were suffering from hooping-cough, and a paroxysm of that distressing malady had left you exhausted, apparently dead, when I softly entered the drawing-room where Louise Féron was standing with her back towards me, and holding you in her arms. She did not hear my footfall, and her face and person, reflected in a lofty pier-glass, fronted me. I stopped suddenly short, shocked, though never a man of super-sensitiveness, by the fiendish expression of the woman's countenance, immediately explained by her sudden, deadly grasp of the infant's mouth and nostrils with

her disengaged right hand. The child's suspended breath would, I can scarcely doubt, have been for ever stilled but for the exclamation which betrayed my presence. Féron turned sharply round, confronted me with a face of flame; rallied, assumed as well as she could, an air of indifference, and left the apartment.'

'You of course informed Mr and Mrs Linwood of what you had seen?'

'I did not; for several reasons. In the first place, I *might* have misjudged the woman's intention; and in the next, I felt quite sure she would not try it on a second time after a hint I quietly gave her, that the child's death, under any circumstances, should be followed by an investigation that would probably only terminate at the Old Bailey.'

'You acted, Mr Webbe, with unpardonable weakness, if not with—— I checked with difficulty the words upon my tongue, and substituted for them—'

'Yes, with unpardonable weakness, as the catastrophe of your narrative, plainly foreshadowed by what I have already heard, too clearly proved.'

'That which you have already heard does *not* foreshadow the catastrophe of my narrative,' retorted Webbe. 'Clearly as you may be able to see through a millstone, it is hardly possible you can discern a catastrophe which has not yet occurred.'

'You speak riddles; but go on.'

'Could I have foreseen the lamentable consequences of interrupting Mademoiselle Féron's manipulation of the child's mouth and nostrils,' continued Webbe with acrid humour, 'I should have been strongly tempted to have turned noiselessly away, and left her to the quiet accomplishment of her purpose.'

'Upon my word, that is cool, Captain Webbe!'

'It would have been a blessing to all parties had I done so,' said the privateer captain. 'To you, who, dying in your innocence, would be at this moment an angel in heaven—a contingency which must now be booked as extremely doubtful at the best: to your father, who—the Féron's instinct of vengeance having been satiated—would not have had the best years of his life rendered miserable by an accusation which to this hour he has found it impossible to repel. But we are all poor short-sighted mortals; and, unconscious of the mischief I was doing, I, as before stated, saved your life.'

'For which piece of mischief, many thanks, Captain Webbe. I drink your health.'

'I, yours; hoping as I do so, that we may yet succeed in discovering a remedy for that unfortunate mistake of mine. But to make sail again. Anthony Waller, Esq., of Cavendish Square, finding himself lonely after his daughter's marriage—which he had never very cordially approved of, you must know—espoused a lovely young widow, and the mother of one only child, Lucy Hamblin, then in her third year, and really quite a miniature angel. Mr Waller not only doted upon his handsome young wife—that, like reading and writing, comes by nature—but upon his little step-daughter; so that your nose, which, without flattery, it is difficult to believe can be the natural development of the unpromising little pug Mademoiselle Féron took such liberties with, was quite put out of joint.'

'This vexed your mother, and, let the truth be told, mightily exasperated your father. There had been no pre-nuptial settlement; and it was feared that the lion's share of Mr Waller's wealth would be diverted to his new wife and "her intrusive brat"—a frequent colloquial amenity of my friend Linwood, duly reported in the proper quarter by the Féron, who, having managed to transfer her services to the Wallers, was now little Lucy's nursery-governess.'

'Thus stood matters in Mr and Mrs Waller's seventh honey-moon—a mellifluous phase of the earth's satellite, which the observation that with extensive view

surveys mankind from China to Peru, will have noticed to be of indefinite duration when the poor and pretty bride happens to be about half the age of the rich and snail bridegroom.'

'Which was not the case in that particular instance, I beg to say.'

'Very nearly the case, I should say; but we will not discuss that fact in natural history just now. The Wallers, I say, were residing, towards the close of their seventh honey-moon, at Clarence Lodge, near Gravesend. At that time, I was in personal communication with Mr Waller, with the hope of inducing him to make one of a company for organising privateering enterprise upon a large scale. I did not succeed; but before I received a final "No," Linwood came down, unaccompanied by either his wife or son. That, however, though made a great deal of subsequently, was easily explained: your mother, as doubtless you are aware, having suffered much from ill-health during the first six or seven years of married life. I think she gave birth to four children, certainly three, who all died under a month old—a fatality which was the main reason that you remained in Wales with grand-mamma. Be that, however, as it may, Linwood came alone, uninvited, and his reception was glum as winter. Nevertheless, he seemed to have made up his mind for a lengthened stay; and, which certainly looked odd, seemed anxious to conciliate the favour of little Lucy Hamblin. Your mother explained to me the other day that he did so by her advice, she thinking that a better feeling might be thereby brought about between the families.'

'The eighteenth of August—a date branded upon the memory of all of us—found William Linwood still a guest, and an unwelcome one, at Clarence Lodge. The day had been sultry, thunderous, and Mr Waller and I, towards evening-fall, after a cool walk in the garden, were seated in the arbour, and enjoying some prime cigars.'

'Mrs Waller had been uneasy for some time on account of the prolonged absence of Louise Féron, who had taken the child out for a walk early in the afternoon; and when the day began to decline visibly, and no Féron, no Lucy appeared, Mr Waller grew fidgety also. He had asked very often for Linwood, and was for the twentieth time remarking upon his non-appearance at the dinner-table, when we saw that gentleman enter the garden by the back-gate.'

'His hair, we could not but remark, was wet and disordered, his face pale, his aspect generally flurried, ill at ease.'

'Hollo, Linwood!' I exclaimed, as he was passing the arbour; 'what is the matter? Have you seen a ghost?'

'Eh!—eh!—what?' he stammered; 'a ghost—stuff! Has—has,' he added—'has Louise Féron returned?'

'No,' said Mr Waller; 'and— By Heaven! here she comes by the same way that you entered, Mr Linwood, and without the child!'

'Without the child!' echoed the woman, sweeping up. 'Why, Mr Linwood has brought home the child, has he not?'

'No—no!' exclaimed Linwood, in great agitation. 'She left me on the sands, and rejoined you, did she not?'

'Rejoined me!' screamed Féron. 'Why, I saw you with my own eyes take her into a boat, and sail out upon the river.'

'No—no—no!' vehemently rejoined your father. 'I meant to do so, but Lucy gave me the slip.'

'Liar—assassin!' shouted the woman. 'I saw the child with you—alone with you in the boat: you have drowned—murdered her! *A la garde!*' shrieked the seemingly frantic creature, as she rushed upon and grappled poor Linwood, who, in his bewilderment, had

really made a movement as if about to run for it—*"seize—bind the assassin! Help—help!"*

'As for me,' resumed Captain Webbe, after a consolatory drink—'as for me, I was knocked over—flabbergasted; and it was hours before I could get my ideas into any kind of order or ship-shape. And so confused now is my recollection of the different versions given by Linwood and Féron; so mixed up are they in my mind with the outrageous inventions and distortions of the newspapers, that, if my life depended upon it, I could give you no intelligible digest of the conflicting statements. Enough to say, that on the morrow, no doubt remained that Lucy Hamblin had been drowned—her hat was cast ashore with a mass of sea-weed—and public opinion gradually settled down into a conviction that your father, for obvious purposes, had compassed the death of the child—a conviction which his flight, in violation of his pledged word, seemed to affirm beyond controversy. He was pursued and apprehended, as you are perhaps aware, at Llanberris farm. Take a pull at the brandy and water, Master Linwood.'

'Go on, will you? Do you think I am made of stone?'

'There is little to add, except that Féron absconded, leaving a note to the effect that she could not, would not, upon reflection, appear as a witness against the husband of the best friend she had ever known. Your father was ultimately liberated without trial; and after striving for several years to bear up against almost universal obloquy, took ship for America, and was captured in the Channel by a French privateer. So ends the story.'

'And with it the hope you have so wantonly kindled, merely, it should seem, to trample it out! What purpose can be answered by the fast-and-loose game, which, as far as words count, you seem to be playing?'

'A great purpose will be answered by the game I propose to play, if you have the pluck and skill to perform your part in it. I tell you again that the catastrophe which will either acquit or finally condemn your father has not yet come to pass. The last decisive act of the drama has yet to be played; and the curtain rose upon that last decisive act, after an interval of nearly fifteen years, about three months since only. Scene the first: Rue Dupetit Thouars, St Malo, Brittany. Enter from opposite sides, a lady and gentleman, who, upon seeing each other, exclaim at the same instant:

"Mademoiselle Féron!"

"Le Capitaine Webbe!"

'Kirke Webbe, captain of the *Scout* privateer, met walking openly in the streets of St Malo! Come, that is a bold flight, even for a modern dramatist!'

'It is a positive fact that I was so met! And as to walking openly in the streets of St Malo, there is no wonderful daring in that: I was playing at rouge et noir, in the Palais Royal, Paris, last Sunday three weeks. Just, however, to bring back colour to those white cheeks, and give you an appetite for the dinner I have ordered, and which ought to have been served by this time, I will give you a hint of some one else I met with in St Malo—to wit, a charming damsel of some seventeen years of age, whom I propose that you shall marry.'

'Let us have no untimely jesting, if you please.'

'A charming damsel, whom it is part of my plan, and may be essential to its success, that you should marry: a most amiable damsel, who calls herself Clémence Bonneville; but whose true name, if I am not the dullest blockhead that ever breathed, is—Guess?'

'*Tut!* How should I be able to guess?'

'Whose true name is, I say, not Clémence Bonneville, or De Bonneville, but—*Lucy Hamblin*—the child supposed to have perished fourteen years ago in the Thames!'

'All-merciful Powers! Can this be true?'

'If it prove not so, write me down an ass, in capital letters. Ha! dinner at last!'

THE OCEAN TELEGRAPH-CABLE ON ITS WAY TO THE BOTTOM.

THAT longest yarn that has ever been spun—that newest sea-serpent which out-herods and puts to shame all the old ones so carefully chronicled by penny-a-liners—that fact so much more wonderful than fancy, that not even the shadow of it was conceived by the brain which invented fictions for a thousand-and-one consecutive nights in the imaginative surroundings of the Happy Arabia—the Atlantic telegraph-cable is actually just about to be deposited in its still oceanic bed. Several different ingredients enter into the composition of this beautiful fabric, as has recently been described. There is copper to carry the message; gutta-percha to confine the same to its intended route; rope-yarn and tar to protect the yielding gutta-percha from the iron gripe of the metallic greatcoat that is firmly twisted round the carrying and insulating core; and the iron itself in its outer eighteen-times sevenfold whorl of tenacious wire. The entire diameter of this composite and many-plied cable is a little more than half an inch; and the diverse substances, with their varying densities, are so apportioned and distributed within these dimensions, that if a mile-length of the structure were hung up in the air, and balanced in some sufficiently capacious pair of scales, it would be found to weigh just nineteen hundredweights. In sea-water, the same length would weigh only thirteen hundredweights, because there the pressure of the water, displaced by its bulk, deducts so much from its downward tendency. The specific gravity of the Atlantic cable is about three times as great as the specific gravity of sea-water.

The weight and density of the Atlantic cable are such, that when it is payed out over the stern of the depositing vessel, it will sink in the salt water, and find its position of final rest at the bottom of the sea. Its weight, however, is not sufficiently great to carry it down with any inconvenient force. The several ingredients of the structure, indeed, have been so selected and adjusted as just to secure the requisite alacrity in sinking, and avoid any dangerous impetuosity in the act. The cable will indeed 'float to the bottom,' rather than sink. It will be in a measure buoyed up as it falls, first by the static pressure of the water, and secondly by the influence of friction, exerted by the watery particles against the uneven side of the twisted strands of the rope. Some alarm has been entertained lest there should be strain enough to injure the molecular texture of the cable, if five or six miles of its length hang down in the mid-Atlantic, in consequence of the great weight of this extent. The alarm, however, is entirely based upon a misconception of the conditions in which the rope will be placed during its deposition. It will not hang upon the stern of the ship on this occasion; it will be drawn out from it, as the silky filament is drawn out from the spinneret of the silkworm. Considerable force is used in winding the frail, almost invisibly fine thread of the silk-worm from the cocoon in which the caterpillar has deposited it, when the reels are set whirling to take off the golden cord; yet the fine and frail thread does not break: the force of the revolving reel goes to draw off the silk from the cocoon, instead of to stretch its material. So will it be with the ocean-cable as it seeks its deep-sea repose; the force of its own weight and of the hold which the sea-bottom will acquire upon its strands, will go to draw its protracted length out from the hold of the advancing ship, over the revolving sheaves, and not to pull upon the cohesive grasp of its particles. The vessel will move at a

rate of some four or five miles over the ocean, and the cable will be gently drawn out from behind, and tenderly laid down in the profound recesses of the deep, as if it were still under the careful management of its black-fingered attendants, the tar-begrimed men who have so patiently and assiduously arranged the spires of its growing coil in the yard during its manufacture.

The cable will come up from the hold, as it is drawn out of the ship, round a central block designed to keep its spires from fouling, or interfering with each other as it runs along. It will then be turned over four grooved sheaves, placed one in front of one another, and geared together; and will finally pass three or four feet above the poop-deck, and make its last plunge from a fifth sheave firmly planted by arms over the stern. One of the mid-deck sheaves will also have a friction-drum geared with it, and revolving with about three times its own velocity; the axle of this drum will be gripped, by two blocks of hard wood being drawn together whenever a screw is turned. As the cable runs out, an electrical current will be passed through it from end to end, and will give a signal every second, to intimate that the electrical continuity of the cable remains perfect. At the side of the ship there will be a log, composed of a spiral vane turned round by the resistance of the water as it is dragged through the liquid; this will register electrically the speed of the vessel's progress by making and breaking a voltaic circuit at each turn. The amount of strain actuating the cable at any instant will also be electrically indicated by wheel-work geared with the paying-out sheaves, when the speed of this wheel-work is compared with the speed of the vessel's progress through the water. The wary breaksman will lend a constant eye and ear to the indications of these tell-tale instruments, and while all is proportioned correctly, will leave well alone; but whenever one element is shewn to be acquiring undue preponderance, his screw will be called into immediate requisition, and a compensatory adjustment of machinery made. The electrical logs, and indeed nearly the whole of the engineering arrangements, are due to the ingenuity and skill of Mr Charles T. Bright, a gentleman who was associated to a considerable extent with Mr Wildman Whitehouse in his early electrical experiments and investigations, and who will now be the tricky presiding spirit of the operations on board the *Niagara*; while Mr Whitehouse sits in the centre of his web on board the *Agamemnon*, in a snug cabin, feeling there the vibrations of his electrical web, and pondering fiery mysteries and subtle things.

Considerable care has been given to the selection of the most auspicious season of the year for the submergence of this wonderful cable. By examining the records of more than 260,000 observations, Lieutenant Maury has determined that between the 20th of July and the 10th of August there is less to fear from either storm, fog, or drifting iceberg, in the mid-Atlantic, than at any other season of the year. The vessels will accordingly be despatched upon their mission as near to this period as will be found practicable. But suppose that, in spite of this precaution, some erratic hurricane—either uninstructed concerning, or indifferent to, the requirements of marine engineering—should encounter the cable-laden ships, and should persevere in its self-willed and vexatious interference with the arrangements of the waves, what does the reader think will be done with the precious rope? It will be simply 'slipped,' as the tempest-caught sailor slips his cable when he is riding in some dangerous and threatening roadstead. Upon the deck of the paying-out ships there are two large auxiliary drums, containing each two miles and a half of a strong supernumerary iron cable, sufficiently stout to bear with impunity a direct

strain of some eleven or twelve tons. In case of need, the telegraph-cable will be cut, and the end of the submerged portion be made fast to the extremity of one of the supernumeraries; this will then be let go, and the telegraph-cable will sink to the bottom of the sea, where not even the most spiteful hurricane can follow it. The strong suspending rope will next be attached, by its upper extremity, to buoys of a peculiarly sharp form, which will be tossed overboard, and abandoned for the time; and the unencumbered vessels will look to themselves, and beat about as circumstances may require, until the storm has passed away; the sharp buoys all the while bobbing up and down in the troubled waves with an easy motion which will hardly affect the treasure plunged for protection to the still depths two miles beneath. The vessels will then return in search of the buoys, pick them up, heave in the suspending rope until the telegraph-cable is recovered, and join the severed ends, and the work of submergence will be resumed as at first.

The Atlantic cable will be stretched from Valentia Bay, in the south-west of Ireland, to Trinity Bay, in Newfoundland—a distance, in a direct line, of about 1834 miles. This is obviously the course in which it has been intended an electrical communication shall be established through the Atlantic, because here the land of the Old World, in the projecting British Isles, and that of the New World, in Newfoundland, jut out towards each other, as if each to seek the other's grasp; and between them, a smooth level shelf is laid at the bottom of the sea, just suitable for the accommodation of an intervening and connecting cord. There are several fine sandy coves in the neighbourhood of Valentia, and the great Skellig Hill, a fine pyramidal landmark, with a light-house on its summit, towers up, a short distance from the shore, to a height of 700 feet. It is not yet determined whether the two paying-out vessels will start away from each other in mid-ocean, dropping the cable between them; or whether it will be paid out in one continuous line from the coast of Ireland to the coast of Newfoundland. The matter is at the present time under consideration. Under either alternative, however, the vessels will proceed in as direct a course from one bay to the other as they can. They would go along an arc of a great circle of the terrestrial sphere, if it were practicable to keep to so finely traced a route; as, however, no navigator, steering by the compass, could accomplish so delicate a task, a track will be taken which will approach very near indeed to a great circle arc. The ships will only change their course six times, and each time the change will be only to the extent of a quarter of a point of the compass; thus they will pass along six sides of a polygon, instead of along a part of a circle; but the polygon followed will practically be so near to a circle, that the track will only measure eight-tenths of a nautical line more than the segment of a circle which would pass directly from place to place.

THE DATE-PALM.

ONE day, an Arab, who had been listening with the greatest interest to a description of the wonderful and beautiful things in England, suddenly asked us: 'Have you many palm-trees in your country?' When told that we have two or three kept at the national expense in a glass-house at Kew, he was filled with the most unfeigned pity for us, and never again expressed either a curiosity to hear about England, or a desire to go there. What is a country without date-trees to an Arab? What can railways and electric-telegraphs, steam-driven looms and gaslights, contribute to the happiness of men deprived of date-trees? Emerald meadows, and oak-forests, and horse-

chestnuts cannot compensate for such a privation. With what do you delight your eyes in a summer's day, when no palm-branches waving overhead temper the stifling air? To what do your poets compare the taper waists of their mistresses, if they have no palm-trees to refer to? 'Now, I can understand,' said our Arab, in conclusion, 'why so many Franks crowd every year to Egypt.'

The date-palm is, in fact, in certain wide-extended tracts of the globe, so essential to life, and furnishes so many of its necessities to their inhabitants, that we need not be surprised if a country where no date-trees grow should have few attractions for them. They look to it for harvest and vintage, and provision for almost all the wants of their simple life. Its high importance is well indicated by the tradition, which relates how the date-palm sprang from the remainder of the clay of which Adam had been formed; in reference to which proverb the Arab prophet says: 'Cherish the date-tree as your paternal aunt.' It is one of the fruits of the Mohammedan paradise; and an Arab proverb asserts that the date-tree grows only in the lands of Islam—a vault which, curiously enough, is up to the present day almost literally exact.

A fanciful Arab author, after citing these facts, proceeds to draw a comparison between man and the date-palm, shewing in how many respects a resemblance may be traced, as if to prove their near relationship. 'As man is distinguished from all other living creatures by his erect gait, even so the palm, tall, straight, and limber, lifts its head among the trees. What animal is so beautiful as man, and what tree is so beautiful as the palm among the trees of the forest? In its head is enclosed a substance like the brain in man; if its head be cut off, the tree will die; if the brain be wounded, the branches droop, and the whole tree suffers from the headache. If its branches be cut off, they do not grow again more than the lopped-off human arm. Its head has a hairy covering like that of man. The sexes are separate, and thus a single tree planted by itself is condemned to perpetual sterility. The male palm, surrounded by his suite of females, is likened to a sultan in his harem, and it is even pretended that sometimes in the midst of a plantation a capricious beauty takes an aversion to her lord, and refuses to be fructified by him. She is smitten by the charms of a tree in some neighbouring plantation; then her branches droop from love-sickness, and her head will be seen to turn in the direction of the object of her choice. When a tree thus pines with love, the only cure—and it is found to be always successful—is to tie a bunch of the blossoms of the loved one among her branches.'

No member of the vegetable kingdom has played so important a part in religion, history, and poetry as the palm; not the Egyptian lotus, nor the Celtic mistletoe, nor the French lily, nor the Norman broom. In the Scriptures, in eastern and classical mythology, the palm appears as the symbol of beauty or victory. It was chosen to grace the one day of triumph which our Lord allowed himself on earth; it has been adopted by Christianity to signify the victory over death, the resurrection, its Greek name being identical with the fabled phoenix, which rose again from its ashes. The life of the palm, again, is in its crown, it has therefore been chosen for the martyr's crown, whose gerdon is eternal life.

Art, not less than poetry and religion, has drawn its inspirations from the palm. It gave the first model for the colonnades which adorn the temple-architecture in Egypt and Greece; and the most perfect, indeed, of the Egyptian temples is that of Edfou, where the imitation is the closest, and where we behold the palm, with its leafy crown and pendent fruits, reproduced in sculpture. Even the refinement in the

form of the columns, which may be remarked in the greatest works of Egypt, as well as in the Acropolis of Athens—the correction of the error of vision by the introduction of a slight swelling towards the centre of their height—was suggested by the palm, whose stem swells in diameter at a certain height from the ground.

The influence which the palm has thus, from the earliest ages, exercised upon the imaginative and inventive faculties of those who lived within the zone of its growth, is easily intelligible. To the traveller's eye, nature displays no more graceful or majestic scene than a palm-grove; and, considering how such groves are generally situated, we cannot wonder if even the child of nature, though little susceptible of æsthetical impressions, should be deeply affected by the sense of their beauty. He only who has seen it can know the animated joy which the distant vision of the palm-grove wakes up in the wearied traveller's heart. His caravan has toiled for days through the treeless, trackless desert, moving painfully through the hot air-waves all on fire with the sun's rays, surrounded only by dark glassy rocks or yellow sands, which reflect the heat and light in which he is immersed, and produce those premature wrinkles which furrow the forehead and draw together the eyelids even of the youthful wayfarer—sands, again, which burn the foot during the day, or strike an icy chill into the body at night; not a blade of grass, not a thorn, not an insect nor a reptile speaking of life, the monotony being unbroken, save here and there by a few piles of loose stones, heaped up by the piety of preceding travellers, to direct the march over undulating sands as unstable and impressionless as water. When at last a dark spot appears on the horizon, promising shade, water, and probably the habitation of man, all hail the sight: the camels, though unbud, break into a quicker march, the foot-sore pedestrians, forgetting their toils, hasten forwards to reach the welcome resting-place; renewed vigour is infused into the whole caravan; until, on drawing nearer to the goal, the general impatience can no longer be restrained, and the slow march becomes an eager race. No primeval forest affords a cooler shade than the palm-groves of the oasis; the sun-rays do not penetrate through their thick roof, while the slender columns of the trees are open to every breath of air. The palm-grove is life in the midst of death—a world surrounded by chaos. The wind sighs in its branches, the birds flutter round them; the long-tailed gerboa gambols about their stems, and marks the ground at their roots with its tiny footprints. Around are strewn delicate plants, among which coleoptera in endless variety wing their buzzing flight. The noise and fulness of life have succeeded to the stillness of the grave. Oh! as the old Scotch proverb says, 'the sight is good for sore eyes.'

All this, however, is a very small part of what man owes to the palm. He can live without splendid architecture; religion will never be at a loss for symbols; and poetry, allowing it to be a necessary of life, has contrived to find images and ideas of beauty independently of our paternal aunt. But without food man cannot exist; he requires a shelter; he is irresistibly impelled to supply himself with a few luxuries—all these, and more than these, the date-tree yields. Its fruit supplies the most nourishing of vegetable food, alike eatable when fresh or when dried, uncooked or cooked. The fleshy insertion of the young branches into the stem at its crown—in form not unlike the leaf of an artichoke—is eatable, and affords a valuable prevention against scurvy. The white pith of the crown or brain, with a flavour of cocoa-nut, is enough for the dinner of six men. All the domesticated animals—horses, dogs, sheep, &c.—are fond of, and thrive upon, the date. Its very stones, softened in

water, or ground into a coarse meal, are a nourishing food for the camel and the cow. No part of this invaluable tree is useless. The hairs are made into mats and baskets; and the branches of which, according to Herodotus, the Ethiopians made their bows, are now made into crates and many articles of furniture. The branches, again, with their leaves, are used to thatch the roofs and wattle the sides of the rude huts of the inhabitants of the oases; and the lower part of the branch, steeped in water and beaten out, makes an excellent besom. The fibrous substance which grows between the branches and trunk, the *lif*, supplies the Arab baths with a pleasant substitute for the sponge; and it is also twisted into ropes and woven into sailcloth. The trunk itself supplies the best building-wood for rafters and columns, and is said to possess the property of curving upwards, instead of inwards, under a weight. Dear old Plutarch, the only gossip of antiquity who has come down to us, refers to this property of the palm-wood; and he likens to it the true athlete—the athlete in the school of virtue, as well as in that of the Pentathlia, who is borne up and supported, not cast down or bent, by the generous struggle. The whole tree, from its root to the furthest tip of its last branch, is thus serviceable to man. There remains only the sap to be accounted for. This, if the crown be laid bare, will afford daily, during three or four months, a gallon of milky juice, which forms the favourite drink of the Arabs. The first day it is sweet, and in this condition all drink it; the second day, it becomes slightly acid and sparkling, and being now also intoxicating, if drunk in large quantities, the graver sort do not touch it. The third day it is vinegar. This *lagby* is not the only stimulant the palm-tree supplies, for the dates, steeped in water, give a wine, which can be preserved for ten or twelve months, and by distillation, affords a colourless spirit.

A good Arab housewife, besides the sirup—which Herodotus calls the honey of the date, as the Arabs themselves sometimes do at the present day, though its usual name is *dibs* (sirup)—will, for a month together, present to her lord every day a different dish, prepared from the date. This fruit admits of as many varieties in cooking as the French egg or the English potato; but it is more important as an article of domestic economy than either. In Europe, the date is still only known as an article of luxury; but if its valuable properties come to be appreciated, it may be one day as popular among our mechanics as it is with the Arab of the desert. Dates of good quality could be sold in England for about fourpence per pound; and they are more nourishing, as well as easier of digestion, than three times the same weight of bread. The want of such a stimulating food has been felt in our manufacturing districts. The date contains a still larger proportion of sugar than the currant. At the same time, the quantities which could be brought to market, without raising the prices, even if the demand increased, are enormous. The whole valley of the Nile is adapted to its culture; and the line of oases from Egypt to Fezzan is capable of yielding an almost unlimited supply. The date-palm surpasses all other trees in the value, as in the variety of its produce. We had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of an Egyptian gentleman who was formerly at the head of Mehemet Ali's agricultural school. He is the proprietor of an estate near Cairo, to the cultivation of which he applies practically all his theoretical knowledge. He told us that he has in the last few years raised large plantations of date-trees from seed, and that he has already begun to realise larger profits than he had ever expected. It is well known that the shade of date-trees planted round a field is not injurious to its produce; it is the only tree under which the Arabs sow, and the space which its

stem or roots occupy is so very small, that its produce in such a situation may be considered all clear gain. The trees begin to bear fruit in five years, and in fifteen, each will give a clear annual profit of about ten shillings, and in favoured localities, even as much as sixteen. The trees will live for 200 years, and their produce seems to suffer no diminution from age. When the trifling expense of sowing and rearing the tree, and the little trouble the subsequent cultivation of it costs, are considered, it cannot be questioned that the results, in an agricultural point of view, are excellent. Ten trees planted on an acre will not sensibly diminish its yield of sugar, cotton, or grain; but within six years they will most considerably increase the revenue derived from it. The date-tree, as we have already observed, is unisexual, and as in sowing, one must take the risk of having far too large a proportion of male trees, our friend gave himself much trouble to discover some method of distinguishing the sex of the seed before planting it, so as to avoid the loss of room, and the trouble which the unnecessary cultivation of many superfluous males causes. Up to the present time, he had been unsuccessful; but when lately with the regiment, of which he is colonel, in the Sa'id, he obtained from two old men information which he promises to experimentalise upon. They told him that by immersing the seeds for three times twenty-four hours in water, carefully covering the vase, and changing the water daily, the seeds would sprout, and that the sex is indicated by the form of the sprout. Another pretended to be able to distinguish them by the form of the indentation which marks one side of the stone. The strangest and least probable information he received, was on the possibility of changing the sex of the tree by a surgical operation. We suggested to him that a microscopic examination of the stones would probably display a difference of structure, but he said that this would not advance him, since he might throw away the females, and preserve only the males. Experiment alone would answer this difficulty, and an experiment extending over three or four years is too much for Arab patience.

There are known to be at least 150 varieties of the date-palm, each of which has its own habitat, and is found nowhere else. It bears fruit only between the 31° and 18° north latitude, and is injured by the air of the sea; its cultivation ceases at heights where snow falls. The violent rains of the tropics are equally destructive to it. It is a tree calculated for the latitudes where years may pass without a single shower falling. The region of the palm extends from the southern parts of Persia, Mooltan, and the Punjab westward through the whole of North Africa to the Canaries; but it produces its finest fruits in Arabia and parts of North Africa—countries which, without it, would afford no food to man. Hence the extreme value of the variety of its productions. The palm-tree grows in the depressions of those immense plains which form the Great Desert. Here, at a depth of three or four feet below the sand, a light loam is found, which affords it nourishment; and its roots, striking perpendicularly into the ground to a great depth, find there the necessary moisture. Sweet water and brackish are alike favourable to its culture; the salts with which the desert is impregnated do not injure its growth; and without further care than the annual pruning of the branches, it produces fruit. Such fruits, however, though eatable and wholesome, are not, of course, of the finest quality. It is a law of nature, that everything intended for the use of man should reach its perfection only through his toil; and in all the places which are celebrated for the excellence of their dates—the Beled-el-jerid, Siwah, Medina, and parts of Yemen—the proprietors are careful to dress the ground, to water and to artificially manure the trees. But in return for such care—requiring no more

than a single day in each week for a large plantation—the harvest is abundant. One year with another, the date-palm, when arrived at its full growth, produces from 300 to 400—in some few localities, as much as 600 pounds of fruit. The finest of all dates are those of Ibrim on the Nubian Nile. Some of the trees there produce fifteen bunches of fruit, each weighing about sixty pounds, the dates themselves each three inches long. It is truly, as the prophet-king sings, 'a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf doth not wither, and whatsoever he doeth prospereth.'

A DESCENT INTO A COAL-MINE.

IN accordance with a pleasant and most laudable custom of our age, Mr H. Hussey Vivian, M.P., agreed, in January last year, to give a lecture at the Truro Institution. He chose a subject with which property and its duties have made him familiar—COAL. Coal, in all its relations, geological, commercial, and social or political, he treated in one short discourse with a breadth of view and a minuteness of knowledge highly remarkable and highly creditable. The lecture has been published;* and we select from its many interesting details the following lively account of a gentleman's descent into a pit. It must be premised that it is a South Wales pit.

'Our first operation is to dress: we are furnished with a strong suit of blue pilot-cloth. We ask how it is this dress is all woolen, and we are told that it does not burn, and may be useful in case of fire. We begin to feel uncomfortable, and to call to mind the awful explosions of which we have read. We advance towards the pit, and a man meets us and presents each of us with a *Davy*. We now feel very awkward, but we have said that we know all about a mine, and we cannot shew the white feather. We say, in an off-hand manner, that we suppose there is not an explosion very often. Our conductor stops and reassures us, stating that "there's never been a one since they got the air round; that she has now 90,000 cubic feet of air a minute going through her, split into ten separate columns; that she is swept out in every *goaf* and top-hole; to exemplify which, he will take the top off at the furthest point we attain." We express at once implicit belief in the 90,000 cubic feet, and the perfect manner in which the mine is swept clear of gas, and we beg our cicerone that he will by all means not trouble himself to unscrew the top of his *Davy* for our instruction. We reach the pit-head: the flat band is travelling at an extraordinary speed; but before we have time to think, up comes the cage with awful velocity; the empty tram is in, the full one is out, and in ten seconds she is away again in the same mad career. In less than sixty seconds, the same operation is gone through; and we now decide on going underground. The cage is at rest, and we hear the words "man going down." "What! you don't mean to say that you expect me to trust my life to that rope, and to the steadiness and nerve of that engine-man? No, I will go by the footway." Our cicerone stares; but our coal-mining friend interposes, and says: "Fortunately, there is none. We cannot afford to waste men's lives and health in making them climb ladders; and man-engines, as you are aware, are too expensive for general use. There is no real danger: we change three hundred men a day, and have done so for years without losing a man. The load of coal is five times as great as the load of men, and you will only go down five miles an hour instead of ten." Convinced against our will, we step into the cage, and away we rush down the shaft at railway speed. Our head whirls; we feel a strong pressure on our ears; we hear the guides pass us with headlong velocity; we hardly know whether we are going up or down; and at last a gentle tap, and we are safely landed in a large vacant space, with sidings, crossings, partings, like a great railway-station on a lilliputian gauge. We are led along, and pass trains of trams, some full, some empty, from which a constant stream ascends and descends the pit, and to which trains are continually added. We are struck with

* Truro: Heard and Sons. Pp. 32.

the bustle and order, the stroke of work which is evidently being done. "How much are you raising?" "Oh, we have just got her up to 600 tons a day." Only figure to yourself this vast quantity daily out of one pit and one small space of ground—the active area, the scene of many years' working, being perhaps 200 acres! How splendidly has Providence provided for our wants, by so disposing bed beneath bed, that we are able, with the least possible trouble and expense, to supply ourselves with this inestimable blessing so conveniently and cheaply! We are conducted to a comfortable cabin with seats around it, and we are told to sit down and get our eyesight. Our *cicerone* proceeds to amuse himself by adjusting the wick of his lamp to the last degree of perfection; and while he does so, we question him a little, and we soon perceive that he is a north-countryman. "How can you extract 150,000 or 180,000 tons of coal a year from the small area of ground you have described?" is our first inquiry. He points to the angle at which the rock is dipping, and says: "We drift across the strata, and thus intersect all the coal-beds. At this level, we have intersected twenty-one beds of coal in a distance of about 600 yards. These are the far-famed lower measures of South Wales; on these, all the great collieries and iron-mines are situated. In this colliery, we have, by drifting, won seventy-two feet of coal, of which sixty-one feet is in beds of three feet and upwards. Every foot of coal extending over one acre, is calculated to be equal to 1500 tons; and, consequently, every acre in this colliery represents 91,000 tons. This is the joint-stock company view of the case, and cannot be realised in practice. Many of these beds are not at present marketable; but they are, nevertheless, coal, and may at some future day be of value. They may work too small; and I know too well," our *cicerone* says, "how you gentlemen in the west look for *nubs*, and how I am blamed if a cargo turns out small. My calculation will show you how it is that we can turn out so vast a quantity from so small a space. The case of flat measures is different. In my county, Durham, we have to look to the produce of one, or, at most, two seams at a time; and when they are worked out, we must sink deeper; but we often raise 1000 tons per day from one colliery; and we are enabled to do it solely by the flatness of the strata, which permits us to drive out in all directions, and thus keep as many different districts going as we do different beds in South Wales." "But you say that these beds are not all of equal value: how is that?" Now, our friend steps in, and says: "To a collier, they are all alike, or nearly so. The roof of one or bottom of another may not be quite so good; but, on the whole, anything three feet, or even two feet, and upwards, is workable. But this is a surface-question: one bed may have a roof which adheres to it so closely, that it cannot be detached, and if I allow it to be worked and shipped, I shortly hear: 'Why, you have sent me nothing but stones!' Some beds may contain sulphur, and if left in heaps, may ignite spontaneously: we must leave them behind; if not, our friend writes us to say: 'Your coal has got rusty as an old horse-shoe, and I have had to keep a man to throw water on it to keep it black.' I say: 'Preserve me from my friend; but that bed cannot be worked.' Another is tender, and our friend writes us: 'You have sent me all *slack*.' Another produces too much ash; another is too free, and won't bind; another has a parting in it; in fact, the right thing in the right place in collieries, as in all other matters, is not easy to obtain. You say: 'One has a parting in it: what does that mean?' I thought a bed of coal was solid and homogeneous." "Far from it, my good sir; a bed of coal is rarely, if ever, formed without some separations in it parallel to its plane and continuous: sometimes this parting is but the thickness of a knife-blade; sometimes it is an inch or foot thick; sometimes coal lies on coal; sometimes shale intervenes, and then it is most prejudicial to its sale, being difficult to keep out. Instances are known in which this parting thickens to masses of rock many fathoms thick, and thus divides the bed into two." "Well, now," says our stranger friend, "let us hear how you work it." "The system of working may be divided into two classes—namely, 'Stall and pillar,' and 'Long wall.' The first consists in taking away only a portion of the coal—

say, one-fifth—leaving the remainder to support the roof until the time arrives for working back, when the pillar left is divided and taken away in sections, allowing the strata to fall: when this has occurred, the district is called the *goaf*. Long-wall work, on the other hand, consists in taking a large breast of coal clean away at once. In many beds, this is impracticable; but the opinion is gaining ground, that, when practicable, this system is preferable. In both cases, main levels or drifts are driven, along which railways are laid and maintained until the coal which they command is exhausted. These main levels form also the airways of the mine; but in all well-worked collieries the waterway is kept distinct."

"Our *cicerone*, who has adjusted the wick of his lamp to his perfect satisfaction, now says: "I think, sir, we had better be going; you've got your eyesight, haven't you?" "Ay, pick up a needle if you will; and away we go. Our friend bends as if he fears he may hit his head—"Oh, keep your head up." We have seven feet by ten here; this is one of our main airways, and we have something like 70,000 cubic feet of air a minute going through it, and we must have it large. This is our main drift across the strata along it; the air is divided off, and carried into five or six different districts, each of which is thus supplied with fresh air. Each column, after airing its appointed district, is carried to the upcast; each district has at the further extremity a regulator or trap-door, by opening or closing which, more or less air is drawn off from the main or parent column; and thus the wants of the colliery are even and simply supplied. This is the *general* arrangement of ventilation. Now, let me call your attention to the strata. In passing along this drift, we shall traverse 133 noticeable changes in the strata, besides twenty-one coal-veins in 320 vertical yards of ground. The leading type of these measures is *clift*, which, when pulverised and exposed to the weather, turns into mud or clay; but we have also *rock*, which, when reduced to its elements, becomes sand. Interspersed are many beds of ironstone, and under each coal-bed there is a bed of fire-clay; that clay is invariably found beneath each bed both in England and everywhere else where true coal exists, and as invariably contains that curious fossil called *stigmaria*, of which more anon. That which you see in this drift, in relation to the succession of various strata, applies to the whole section of the coal-field, stated to be some 2000 fathoms in thickness. The lower and upper measures, however, contain more *clift* or clay, and the middle more sandstone rock. The coal-measures of all England have much the same characteristics, although known locally by different names. Well, now at length we reach the coal, and stand amazed at its thickness: twelve feet of solid coal; about the height to the gallery of this spacious apartment. The pick rings against it clear and joyful as a marriage-bell—joyful, for if it does not, we betide the shipper, for it is all *slack*, that skeleton in every collier's corner! We are shewn its full thickness, its partings, its cleavage, its holing, its roof, its underlay; its merits are descanted on as those of a familiar friend, and our *cicerone* with pride assures us that his "elder brother," though only eight feet big, is just beyond, and quite as good or better. Well, we now turn to the right or left along the course of the bed, and we soon enter a *stall* or *bord*. We are shewn how the air is caused to pass up it by means of light wooden planking, called a *brattice*, and then down the other side, sweeping the face of the working as it goes. We find at the end of the stall, which is perhaps five yards wide, a man at work, perhaps lying down, holing for yards under the coal; perhaps kneeling or standing up to cut deep into one side; perhaps boring for his shot. He ceases. Our *cicerone* takes the pick, raps it, broad side, against where he knows the coal is most solid, and extracts a sonorous ring, with a "Well, Davy, it's all right; coal strong." "Is indeed, master; I never did know it so strong in my life: the price is too little." "Oh, nonsense, man; why, you made your thirty shillings last week." "This is the best man we have got in the pit, sir." Davy grins, and away we go to the furnace. "What! are you not afraid of this enormous fire, that the coal will catch?" "O no; we have airways and counter-arches

to protect it." We cannot stand before it; it reminds us of Dante's description of the infernal regions—a perfect sea of flame and smoke rolling in lurid clouds, we know not whither, and lighting up the darkness; and yet the coal thus consumed does more "duty" than any theorist attributes to it, and the furnace, with its brick-shaft 500 feet deep, amply fulfils its mission. Now, one step into the *returns*, and then to the glorious light of day. We must explain. The returns of a colliery are not its profits. I fear, in many cases, if we attempted to find *them*, we might search in vain, and our search might end, as a colliery without return would surely end, in an "explosion." Well, a colliery return is its air after it has done its allotted duty; and the pride of a collier is to shew that his returns are not *loaded*—that is, charged with inflammable gas. We go through a door which slams behind us as if it would smash its every fibre. Off goes the top of our cicerone's lamp; we feel queer: his hand shades the flame, and he begs us remark that little or no elongation or halo plays around it. He takes us to a more secluded spot, and with his top on, he shews us a fine thin halo playing round the flame: he raises his lamp—it fills with flame: he slowly lowers it, and says: "Now, sir, if it had not been for Sir Humphry Davy, you and I would now be scorched and blackened corpses." We are quite content with the success of his experiment, and are glad to find ourselves in mad career up the pit, and again on, not in, mother-earth.

GLASS-ENGRAVING.

On being told that I had come to see glass-engraving, the young man plied his wheel briskly, and taking up a ruby tazza, in a few minutes there stood a deer with branching antlers on a rough hillock in its centre—a pure white intaglio set in the red. I had never before seen the process, and was surprised by its simplicity. All those landscapes, hunting-scenes, pastoral groups, and whatever else which appear as exquisite carvings in the glass, are produced by a few tiny copper wheels or disks. The engraver sits at a small lathe against a window, with a little rack before him, containing about a score of the copper disks, varying in size from the diameter of a half-penny down to its thickness, all mounted on spindles, and sharpened on the edge. He paints a rough outline of the design on the surface of the glass, and selecting the disk that suits best, he touches the edge with a drop of oil, inserts it in the mandril, sets it spinning, and holding the glass against it from below, the little wheel eats its way in with astonishing rapidity. The glass, held lightly in the hands, is shifted about continually, till all the greater parts of the figure are worked out; then, for the lesser parts, a smaller disk is used; and at last the finest touches, such as blades of grass, the tips of antlers, eyebrows, and so forth, are put in with the smallest. Every minute he holds the glass up between his eye and the light, watching the development of the design; now making a broad excavation, now changing the disk every ten seconds, and giving touches so slight and rapid that the unpractised eye can scarcely follow them; and in this way he produces effects of foreshortening, of roundness, and light and shade, which to an eye-witness appear little less than wonderful. The work in hand happened to be tazzi, and in less than half an hour I saw deer in various positions roughed out on six of them, and three completely finished. —*White's July Holiday in Saxony, Bohemia, and Silesia.*

PRESERVING FISH.

Fish may be preserved in a dry state, and perfectly fresh, by means of sugar alone. Fresh fish may be thus kept for some days, so as to be as good when boiled as if just caught. If dried and kept free from mouldiness, there seems no limit to their preservation; and they are much more nutritious in this way than when salted. This process is particularly valuable in making what is called kippered salmon; and the fish preserved in this manner are far superior in quality and flavour to those which are salted or smoked. A few table-spoonfuls of brown sugar are sufficient for a salmon of five or six pounds' weight; and

if salt be desired, a tea-spoonful or two may be added. Saltpetre may be used instead of salt, if it be wished to make the kipper hard.—*Cooley's Cyclopædia.*

'PER ARDUA'

Nor on the common road
Of Life, where thousands with eyes downcast go,
With th' unambitious crowd, return we, slow,
Unprofiting, to God.

But up the arduous steep
Whose summit crown the beauteous trees of truth
And hope, do we, in this our stalwart youth,
Our onward journey keep.

Not idly on the beach
We watch the turmoil of the tossing world—
See strong hearts sink, with bright hopes new-unfurled,
Unaided, in our reach.

But on the angry deep
We earnest toil, to save from its distress
Some drowning soul, if so on earth one less
Sad heart bereft may weep.

Not, cowards, from the fight
Of the torn peoples will we hang aback;
Nor in the strife our arms to strike be slack
For mankind's God-given Right.

But where the spoiler's brand
Sweeps widest, where his heart out-trampling heel
Is firmest set, where Freedom's banners reel—
There will we take our stand.

Not in the blotted book
Of man's false life, where fashion, prejudice,
And selfish greed, have writ their cursed lies,
May we unscorning look.

But by the rays that dart
From Truth's lamp, gain we from the unread soul
Its wondrous lore, and strive to read the scroll
Of man's mysterious heart.

We would not write on sand
Our names, that when we tread the quays of Time
No more, no manly deed, or thankful rhyme
Shall mark where now we stand.

But we will labour now,
That when we pass to the far Resting-haven,
Our not unuseful lives may be engraven
On a world's grateful brow. D. L. P.

JEWELLER'S GOLD.

This term is applied to alloys of gold, used for trinkets and inferior articles of jewellery, ranging from three or four carats fine upwards, or which are too inferior to receive the Hall mark. The lowest alloy of this class is formed of copper, 16 parts; silver, 1 to 1½ part; gold, 2 to 3 parts; melted together. This is worth only from 8s. 6d. to 9s. 6d. the ounce. 'It has recently been found that gold of the quality of 12 carats or less, if alloyed with zinc instead of the proper quantity of silver, presents a colour very nearly equal to that of a metal at least 2½ or 3 carats higher, or of 8s. or 10s. an ounce more value; and the consequence has been, that a large quantity of jewellery has been made of gold alloyed in this manner; and the same has been purchased by some shopkeepers, very much to their own loss, as well as that of the public, inasmuch as a galvanic action is produced, after a time, upon gold so alloyed; by means of which the metal is split into separate pieces, and the articles rendered perfectly useless. Gold chains, pencil-cases, thimbles, and lockets, are the articles of which the public and the shopkeepers will do well to take heed, as these have, among some other things, been lately so constructed.'—*Watherston's Art of Assaying.*

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